

Message Text

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ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 EUR-08 NEA-07 ARA-06 IO-03 NSC-05

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ACDA-10 H-01 OMB-01 /072 W

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P R 271725Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5031

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LOURENCO MARQUES

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

S E C R E T NOUAKCHOTT 0205

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR XJ AO MR

SUBJECT: ANGOLA: MAURITANIA URGES CONTINUED RESISTANCE TO SOVIET
INTERVENTION

REF: STATE 13701

1. MAURITANIAN MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, HAMDI
OULD MOUKNASS, CALLED ME IN JANUARY 26 TO CONVEY HIS GOVERN-
MENT'S GROWING CONCERN OVER CONTINUING DETERIORATION IN ANGOLA,
AND TO URGE WEST AND VERY SPECIFICALLY THE US TO REDOUBLE ITS
EFFORTS TO COUNTER SOVIET INTERVENTION IN SUPPORT OF MPLA.

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FOR PAST TWO WEEKS MOUKNASS HAS LIVED ANGOLA PROBLEM: AT

OAU FOREIGN MINISTERS CONFERENCE, AT OAU CHIEFS OF STATE MEETING,
AND AT JUST-CONCLUDED MEETING OF OAU LIBERATION COM-
MITTEE. (HE RETURNED FROM LOURENCE MARQUES EVENING
JANUARY 25.)

2. IN INTRODUCING SUBJECT, MOUKNASS DECLARED ANGOLA
PROBLEM HAS SPLIT AFRICA INTO TWO EVENLY-DIVIDED CAMPS
AND ISSUE NOW DOMINATES AFRICAN COUNCILS VIRUTALLY TO
EXCLUSION OF EVERYTHING ELSE. HE REPORTED MPLA MILI-
TANTS ATTEMPTED TO FORCE LIBERATION COMMITTEE TO FOCUS
ON ANGOLA, AND ONLY CONCERTED EFFORTS OF OTHERS (AR-
GUING CHIEFS OF STATES HAD ACTED, WORKING GROUP WAS
SEIZED WITH FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY, AND MINISTERS HAD
NO RIGHT TO SECOND-GUESS CHIEFS) MANAGED TO SIDETRACK
MILITANTS AND REFOCUS ATTENTION ON ZIMBABWE, NAMIBIA,
ETC. MOUKNASS RECALLED MAURITANIA HAD SUPPORTED MPLA
DURING FIGHT AGAINST PORTUGUESE COLONIALISTS. BUT
ACHIEVEMENT OF INDEPENDENCE HAD FUNDAMENTALLY ALTERED
SITUATION, AND REQUIRED ALL SYMPATHIZERS TO CEASE SUP-
PORT OF PARTICULAR LIBERATION GROUP AND BEGIN PRESSING
FOR GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL UNITY. MOUKNASS INSISTED THAT
ONLY WORKABLE SOLUTION WAS COALITION OF ALL THREE FAC-
TIONS, AND DECLARED FAILURE OF THREE GROUPS TO ESTABLISH
SINGLE COMPROMISE GOVERNMENT WOULD INSURE 25 TO 30 YEARS
OF BLOODY CIVIL WAR. PRESIDENT KAUNDA'S GRAPHIC DES-
CRIPTION OF HUMAN AND MATERIAL RAVAGES OF CURRENT FIGHT-
ING DURING CONVERSATION AT ADDIS CLEARLY MADE LASTING
IMPRESSION ON MOUKNASS.

3. MOUKNASS THEN DECLARED THAT WEST AND SPECIFICALLY
THE US MUST NOT ALLOW SOVIETS TO IMPOSE MPLA ON REST OF
ANGOLA, AND URGED US TO CONTINUE AND TO REDOUBLE ITS
EFFORTS TO COUNTER SOVIET INTERVENTION. (DURING PRE-
SENTATION, MOUKNASS SEVERAL TIMES EXPLICITLY EQUATED
CUBANS WITH SOVIETS.) OBSERVING THAT GREAT POWERS HAVE
RESPONSIBILITY FOR LOOKING AHEAD 20 TO 30 YEARS,
MINISTER NOTED SOVIETS HAVE ALREADY ACQUIRED "PRESSURE
POINTS" UP AND DOWN WEST COAST OF AFRICA AND HAVE FOOT-
HOLD IN ALGERIA. HE SUGGESTED THAT IF SOVIETS WERE NOT
STOPPED NOW THEY WOULD IN A FEW YEARS BE ABLE TO EXERT
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EFFECTIVE PRESSURE ON REMAINING STATES OF CENTRAL AND
WEST AFRICA FROM LOCATIONS WHERE THEY ARE ALREADY IN-
STALLYED. AND ONCE SOVIETS ARE DUG IN, "ATLANTIC IS NO
LONGER VERY WIDE". MINISTER REPEATEDLY CHARACTERIZED
SITUATION AS "TRES, TRES GRAVE", AND SPEAKING FOR MAURI-
TANIAN LEADERSHIP ASSERTED THAT "WE ARE AFRAID". MOUK-
NASS COMMENTED QUIETLY THAT WHILE HE AND HIS COLLEAGUES
HAD PERHAPS NOT PERCEIVED VERY CLEARLY ISSUES POSED IN

VIETNAM, THEY HAVE CRYSTAL-CLEAR VIEW OF THREAT POSED BY SOVIET EXPANSIONISM NOW THAT VENUE IS AFRICA AND TARGET IS THEIR CLOSE FRIENDS AND PERHAPS EVEN THEMSELVES. HE ADMITTED PUZZLEMENT OVER TWO POINTS: HE DECLARED HE COULD NOT COMPREHEND SOVIET BEHAVIOUR IN ANGOLA NOR FATHOM SOVIET POLICY IN AFRICA SINCE SOVIET ACTIONS WERE SUCH CLEAR AND TOTAL REPUDIATION OF HELSINKI AGREEMENT SIGNED JUST FEW SHORT MONTHS AGO. SECOND, HE COULD NOT COMPREHEND ATTITUDE OF US CONGRESS RE ANGOLA WHEN SOVIET THREAT AGAINST AFRICA AND WEST WAS SO OBVIOUS TO ANYONE WHO TOOK A MOMENT TO LOOK.

4. RECALLING PRESIDENT FORD'S LETTER TO PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH AND POINTING TO SERIES OF PUBLIC STATEMENTS SECRETARY HAS MADE RECENTLY ON ANGOLA, I ASSURED MINISTER THAT EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF USG IS AS CONCERNED AS HE ABOUT SOVIET EXPANSIONISM INTO SOUTHERN AFRICA AND AS CONVINCED AS HE THAT ONLY SOLUTION IN ANGOLA IS COALITION GOVERNMENT OF ALL POLITICAL AND TRIBAL GROUPINGS. I ALSO EXPRESSED CONVICTION THAT PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY ARE DETERMINED TO CONTINUE TO COUNTER SOVIET INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA, AND VOICED CONFIDENCE THAT THEY WILL DEVISE SOME WAY TO PERSUADE CONGRESS TO PERMIT THEM TO DO SO.

5. COMMENT: WHILE GIRM'S NEW-FOUND CONCERN OVER SOVIET MEDDLING MAY BE CALCULATED TACTIC TO LAY GROUNDWORK FOR SUBSEQUENT EFFORT TO CONVINCE USG OF CONGRUENCE OF ANGOLA AND SAHARA, I AM MORE INCLINED TO BELIEVE THAT IT IS HONEST RESULT OF SUDDEN DISCOVERY OF POLITICAL REALITY. (A DISCOVERY MAURITANIAN AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON HAS NOT YET MADE PER REFTEL). LAST EAST-WEST CONFRONTATION IN AFRICA WAS FIFTEEN PLUS YEARS AGO WHEN MAURITANIA WAS FRENCH COLONY STRUGGLING FOR INDEPENDENCE AND PRESENT MAURITANIAN LEADERS (WITH

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EXCEPTION OF PRESIDENT) WERE TEENAGE STUDENTS. MORE-OVER, IMMEDIACY OF THREAT IN TIME AND SPACE IS MARVELLOUSLY EFFECTIVE FOR CLEARING ONE'S MIND, PARTICULARLY OF THIRD WORLD RHETORIC ABOUT POPULAR DEMOCRACY AND ANTI (US) IMPERIALISM OF NORTH KOREA, NORTH VIETNAM, AND VIET CONG WHICH WAS SWALLOWED WHOLE UNCHALLENGED A FEW SHORT YEARS AGO. WHAT WE ARE WITNESSING MAY BE THE BEGINNINGS OF THE POLITICAL MATURATION OF AN IDEALISTIC THIRD WORLD LEADERSHIP GROUP WHICH HAS BEEN FORCED BY THE CONSEQUENCES OF ITS OWN POLICY DECISIONS ON SAHARA TO FACE UP TO AND GRAPPLE WITH THE UNPLEASANT POLITICAL REALITIES OF THIS WORLD. KEYSTONE OF MAURITANIA'S FOREIGN POLICY THESE PAST FIFTEEN YEARS, THE GOAL, ACTIVELY PURSUED, OF BEING FRIENDS WITH AS MANY NATIONS AS POSSIBLE, MAY WELL HAVE BEEN FIRST CASUALTY OF ITS

SAHARA ADVENTURE.HANDYSIDE

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